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UPDATE ON INFLUENZA PANDEMIC

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State health officials report 123 people in Death Valley, Indiana have confirmed cases of influenza ("the flu"), of which 4 have died.

To prevent the further spread of the flu, state health officials urge the residents of Death Valley to:

*Wash hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds in warm, soapy water, especially after sneezing or coughing; and *Sneeze or cough into their sleeves if a disposable tissue is not available and avoid using handkerchiefs, which can harbor the flu virus.

State Health Commissioner Judy Monroe, M.D. says most individuals with influenza should stay at home, get plenty of rest, drink a lot of liquids, avoid using alcohol or tobacco products, and take acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen if they have a fever.

She says the symptoms of this strain of influenza include: fever (usually high), chills, headache, raised red itchy rash, dry cough, runny/stuffy nose, sore throat, muscle aches, and extreme tiredness.

Although they will feel quite ill for up to a week, many people with flu symptoms will be able to treat themselves at home. Dr. Monroe recommends calling your health care provider if you or a family member have trouble breathing, shortness of breath, a persistently high or worsening fever, chest pain, seizures, severe abdominal pain, continuous vomiting, confusion, lethargy, or are not able to drink fluids or urinate for 24 hours. People experiencing severe symptoms of the flu should seek medical care at the Muscatatuck Urban Training Center (MUTC) emergency room.

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